

NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, more than 15 years ago, Congress directed the Department of Energy (DOE) to take responsibility for the disposal of nuclear waste created by commercial nuclear power plants and our nation's defense programs. Today, there are more than 100,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel that must be dealt with. Over a year has now passed since the DOE was absolutely obligated under the NWPA of 1982 to begin accepting spent nuclear fuel from utility sites. Today DOE is no closer in coming up with a solution. This is unacceptable. This is in fact wrong—so say the Federal Courts. The law is clear, and DOE must meet its obligation. If the Department of Energy does not live up to its responsibility, Congress will act.

I am encouraged that Congressmen BLILEY, BARTON, UPTON, and the rest of the House of Representatives have begun to address this issue. It is good to see a bipartisan effort for a safe, practical and workable solution for America's spent fuel storage needs. The proper storage of spent fuel is not a partisan issue—it is a safety issue. The solution being advanced is certainly more responsible than just leaving waste at 105 separate power plants in 34 states all across the nation. There are 29 sites which will reach their storage capacity by the end of this year.

Where is DOE? Where is the solution? All of America's experience in waste management over the last twenty-five years of improving environmental protection has taught Congress that safe, effective waste handling practices entail using centralized, permitted, and controlled facilities to gather and manage accumulated waste.

Mr. President, the management of used nuclear fuel should capitalize on this knowledge and experience. Nearly 100 communities have spent fuel sitting in their "backyard," and it needs to be gathered and accumulated. This lack of a central storage capacity could very possibly cause the closing of several nuclear power plants. These affected plants produce nearly 20% of America's electricity. Closing these plants just does not make sense.

Nuclear energy is a significant part of America's energy future, and must remain part of the energy mix. America needs nuclear power to maintain our secure, reliable, and affordable supplies of electricity. Nuclear power, at the same time, allows the nation to directly and effectively address increasingly stringent air quality requirements.

Both the House and the Senate passed a bill in the 105th Congress to require the DOE to build this interim storage site in Nevada, but unfortunately this bill didn't complete the legislative process because of time constraints. We ran out of time. I challenge my colleagues in both chambers

of the 106th Congress to get this environmental bill done. The citizens, in some 100 communities where fuel is stored today, challenge the Congress to act and get this bill done. The nuclear industry has already committed to the federal government about \$15 billion toward building the facility. In fact, the nuclear industry continues to pay about \$650 million a year in fees for storage of spent fuel. It is time for the federal government to honor its commitment to the American people and the power community. It is time for the federal government to protect those 100 communities.

To ensure that the federal government meets its commitment to states and electricity consumers, the 106th Congress must mandate completion of this program—a program that includes temporary storage, a site for permanent disposal, and a transportation infrastructure to safely move used fuel from plants to the storage facility.

Mr. President, this federal foot dragging is unfortunate and unacceptable. Clearly, the only remedy to stopping these continued delays is timely action in the 106th Congress on this legislation. By moving this process, which must also include the work of the Senate, the House's work can be improved. Let's move forward and get this bill done.

COMMENDING ABHISHEK GUPTA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to praise the outstanding accomplishments of a distinguished young man from Florida. At the age of 17, Abhishek Gupta has succeeded in making a greater contribution towards the alleviation of pain and suffering on a global scale than most people can boast of in a lifetime. Last November, Abhishek organized 9 other students and initiated a project designed to provide humanitarian relief to underprivileged citizens in his Southern Florida community and throughout the world.

In a rare exemplification of compassion and determination, Abhishek, a junior at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, created a non-profit organization called "Clothes, Food and Education for the Poor and Needy." Drawing on Abhishek's inspiration, this group worked toward the goal of raising \$50,000 to provide crucial relief for numerous families about whom Abhishek had read in several local newspaper articles.

Abhishek went to work lobbying corporate sponsors to pay for operational expenses, and entreating members of his community to help him meet his goal. Ultimately, he exceeded his own expectations by raising \$60,000 in a matter of weeks. He channeled this money toward helping impoverished children in Southern Florida and victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America.

Mr. President, I have always believed that the most effective way to give charity is to give time—money comes second. I want to stress that Abhishek did not only formulate the infrastructure for raising such a lofty sum, he also spent part of his Christmas vacation accompanying a medical team to Honduras and Nicaragua in order to contribute personally. During his week in Central America, Abhishek helped administer food, clothing and medical supplies to the disaster victims, and provided direct medical aid to nearly 600 patients who were in dire need of treatment.

"Clothes, Food and Education for the Poor and Needy" is continuing to collect donations for relief of the downtrodden, and I commend Abhishek Gupta for his dedication to such a worthy cause. It is rare that so young a citizen can play such a direct role in both reducing human pain and suffering, and providing inspiration to old and young alike.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 28, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,598,229,787,052.49 (Five trillion, five hundred ninety-eight billion, two hundred twenty-nine million, seven hundred eighty-seven thousand, fifty-two dollars and forty-nine cents).

One year ago, April 28, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,512,794,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twelve billion, seven hundred ninety-four million).

Five years ago, April 28, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,564,295,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred sixty-four billion, two hundred ninety-five million).

Ten years ago, April 28, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,756,668,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred fifty-six billion, six hundred sixty-eight million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,841,561,787,052.49 (Two trillion, eight hundred forty-one billion, five hundred sixty-one million, seven hundred eighty-seven thousand, fifty-two dollars and forty-nine cents) during the past 15 years.

SENATOR DAVID PRYOR—HELPING THE REFUGEES AND INSPIRING US ALL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, our former colleague in the Senate from Arkansas, David Pryor, has a new mission, and I believe that all of us will be greatly inspired by his commitment and dedication.

During the spring term this year, Senator Pryor has been a fellow at the Institute of Politics in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Last week, touched by the

tragic plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Kosovo, he left for Tirana, Albania to be a volunteer with the International Rescue Committee, which is dedicated to easing the plight of the refugees.

I commend our former colleague for the inspiring example he is setting of service to those most in need. His action clearly and deeply impressed his students at Harvard. An article in the Harvard Crimson last week reported his decision and his departure for Albania. I believe the article will be of interest to all of us in the Senate, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Harvard Crimson, Apr. 21, 1999]

IOP FELLOW PRYOR HEADS TO BALKAN STATES—FORMER SENATOR TO AID KOSOVAR REFUGEES

(By Alysson R. Ford)

Since the NATO bombings of Yugoslavia began almost a month ago, members of the Harvard community have expressed concern about the plight of Kosovar refugees in peace vigils, panels, and class discussions on Kosovo.

But David Pryor—a spring term fellow at the Institute of Politics (IOP) and a former U.S. senator and governor of Arkansas—has taken his desire to help ease the refugee crisis a few steps further.

After notifying colleagues and students of his decision Monday, Pryor departed yesterday for the Albanian capital of Tirana as volunteer for the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

In a letter to Director of the IOP Alan K. Simpson, Pryor expressed that he wanted to do something concrete for those devastated by the conflict.

Pryor wrote that he did not know exactly how he would help the Kosovar refugees but added that he felt it was important to offer his assistance.

"What I am doing is something I must do. I don't know exactly where I will be, nor do I know what my assignment will be, I just hope I can make a contribution—even though small," Pryor wrote. "I was too young for Hitler, too self-preoccupied for [the civil rights struggle in] Selma, and this time I've got to do something."

Pryor estimated in his letter that he would be gone 30 to 60 days with the IRC, an organization created in 1933 to assist victims who were fleeing from Nazi Germany. The group has been in the Balkans since 1991, according to Edward P. Bligh, IRC vice president of communications.

Most recently, the IRC has sent volunteers and aid to Albania and Macedonia to help the refugees who have been streaming out of Kosovo. The group is helping to shelter refugees and develop water supplies and sanitary facilities. It also provides medical services and has special programs for children, Bligh said.

Pryor also wrote in his letter that the IRC volunteers had inspired him.

"To be able to watch and know these gallant, and yes, believing, young men and women who want to serve restores faith and binds our hopes together," Pryor wrote.

But those who know Pryor said he is the one providing inspiration to others.

"Here's a man that has dedicated his life to serving the people of Arkansas [and] the

people of the U.S.," said IOP fellow and former South Carolina governor David Beasley. "He makes us proud to be American, and he inspires us all."

Simpson spoke of the positive example that Pryor is setting, particularly to the often-cynical students he sees on campus.

"When [students] look around cynically at politicians and those looking only to serve themselves, they'll remember David Pryor [as a positive example]," Simpson said.

Pryor taught a study group at the IOP this semester called "Everything (Well Almost) You Ever Wanted To Know About Winning and Holding Public Office But Were Afraid to Ask."

Students who know Pryor said they were impressed by his commitment to helping others.

"For this 65-plus-year-old, former U.S. senator to just decide to go off to Albania . . . I think it really exemplifies the kind of person he is and the kind of senator he was," said Eugene Krupitsky '02, one of Pryor's study group liaisons.

"It was just amazing to think of this individual just leaving the IOP early to go do community action. It's exemplary that he is bridging the gap between politics and community service," he added.

In his letter, Pryor wrote of a friend from his home state who has a sign painted on the side of his truck that says, "When you wake up, get up, and when you get up, do something."

"That's what I intend to do," Pryor wrote. "I'm going to go over and do something."

COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW CONTROL AND PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Smith-Snowe Combined Sewer Overflow Control and Partnership Act of 1999. If enacted, this bill will eliminate or appropriately control combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharges in this country by the year 2010. This legislation will also help ratepayers in at least 53 communities throughout the state of Maine and over 1,000 other communities around the country. Presently, over 43 million people in the U.S. are incurring the high costs of trying to overcome the problem of combined sewer overflows because of the lack of federal statute and funding to meet federal sewage treatment mandates for these CSO communities.

Mr. President, CSOs are by far the single largest public works project in the history of almost every CSO community. When the Maine Municipal Association members met with me last month, they informed me of communities where people are facing paying more in sewer rates than they will owe in property taxes. This, to me, is unacceptable.

Most, but not all, of the combined sewer systems are located primarily in the Northeast and Great Lakes areas where sewer lines and stormwater collection systems were first constructed in the 1800s and early 1900s. Typically, sewer lines designated to carry raw sewage from urban residential areas

and business were laid first. These were followed by stormwater drainage systems designed to collect rainwater during storms to reduce or eliminate urban flooding. In many cases, sewer lines and stormwater conduits were connected into a combined sewer, which served as a single collection system to transport both sewage and stormwater. Eleven states in the two geographic areas of New England and the Great Lakes account for 85 percent of the water-quality problems attributed to CSOs nationwide.

Sewer overflow problems arise mainly during wet weather, causing an overload of the systems, and the untreated or partially treated waste water discharges through combined sewer overflow outfalls into receiving waters such as rivers, lakes, estuaries and bays. The CSOs are the last remaining discharges from a point, or known, source of untreated or partially treated sewage into the nation's waters.

The federal government has been long on regulation and short on financial assistance. The CSO problem was first addressed when Congress revisited the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, better known as the Clean Water Act, almost three decades ago. The subsequent Clean Water Act Amendments of 1972 established the fundamental principles and objectives of a national wastewater management policy. To implement these goals, a national program was created to regulate the discharge of pollutant into surface waters, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES. This system required outfalls for industrial process waste and sewage from municipal treatment plants. Individual states were allowed to assume responsibility for the administration of NPDES once their permitting processes were approved by the EPA.

Maine and 37 other states operate EPA-approved NPDES permitting programs. The law requires that state water-quality standards be consistent with federal policy, but, if necessary to achieve the act's objectives, states are allowed to impose water-quality standards more stringent than those required by federal regulations.

Section 10(a)(4) of the CWA Amendments of 1972 explicitly linked the achievement of national water-quality goals to federal financial assistance for municipalities affected by the new mandate by creating the Construction Grants Program (CGP) that provided subsidies for the construction of publicly owned treatment works. In Section 516(b), the EPA was charged with administering the program, and was required to develop biennial estimates of the cost of construction of all needed publicly owned treatment works in each of the States.

In the past, federal funds have paid for as much as 75 percent of the construction costs for water treatment